



The QUARAE



Volume 20 Issue 8

Editor John Lindvay WB3IFD

August 2019



It Seems to Me

I attended the Wattsburg Hamfest. I had some ham gear setting around forever and I thought I could get rid of it. I did get rid of some of it, but I bought more than I sold. Oh well, it is hard to pass up a bargain. It was an interesting hamfest. Rick Cutter WA3MKT demonstrated his pneumatic antenna launcher. Bing Hahn W9BR demonstrated his drone with camera. In the picture I am sitting at

back of the car 2nd from the end in the lower right. He took more pics, but I am going to have them posted on the club internet site.

Did you ever wonder where they got the idea for a distress signal “May Day”. I am reading the *Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood and the main characters are discussing the origin of “May Day”. The narrator says that it comes from the

French phrase “m’aidez” which means “save me”. Who knew?

I am glad the heat wave is over, although it is still too warm for me. I have not got any of my antenna work done. I hope to work on it a bit today. I need to get this issue done before the club meeting.

I have publishing the QuaRae for six years now. I spent time the other day reading some of the old QuaRaes. I don’t even remember writing most of them. I am slowly losing my memory. I guess that is a product of old age.

I went out to the RAE club site for field day. I didn’t show up until maybe 4 PM Saturday. Most of the people were working the hot bands; forty, and eighty. I worked 15 meters. During the day, someone made 15 or 16 contacts on 15, so I thought I would give it a try. I tuned up and down the band and heard nothing. I continued to do this and every once and a while a strong signal would come through. I made three contacts. The first was Maine which probably was e-skip. I next worked a station in Florida. He was very strong for about three or four minutes and then faded away. After sitting there for a few hours, I heard a faint signal around 10 PM. At first I could not make out any intelligence. I was finally able to hear the call letters, A51xxx. I forgot what the suffix was. Doug would know. Anyhow, the station was on Cook Island. I called him a few times and finally he heard me. We exchanged RST’s of 23, and that was my third contact and last contact for the night and field day.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

No Club minutes.

Meeting was canceled due to 4th of July holiday

Keeping Lines of Communication Open--CERT & Ham Radio

[This article is from the July 2019 issue of the *FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Newsletter*.]



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members know that communication during

an emergency is vital. Don Lewis of the Alexandria Radio Club in Virginia wants CERTs around the country to know how Amateur Radio can help.

Amateur Radio is a useful tool. Lewis, who is trained in CERT, explained that ham radios are more powerful than regular radios. They aren't incredibly expensive, and they have a wide range of uses.

Sometimes CERTs may need to work together throughout a large area. They need to be able to report things that they have found. They sometimes even need to request medical support. Using a radio is easier, safer, and more efficient than sending a person back with messages, says Lewis. Ham radios enable a CERT to communicate over much greater distances than standard radios. This can improve the level at which a CERT can coordinate. CERTs already use ham radios in exercises and they have extended their range and effectiveness.

The City of Berkeley, California's CERT has already begun using ham radio in city-wide disaster drills. In the winter of 2018, they held a 24-hour mock disaster where they practiced their ham radio skills to better prepare their city. They were able to maintain communications in the whole city for the entire 24-hour exercise. This allowed them to relay critical information to citizens and disaster crews. They were also able to use hams to aid the city during a blackout in November of 2017. The CERTs used solar powered batteries in their ham radios. This allowed them to function even when power and phones were down.

Amateur Radio protocols are also built into Pasadena, California's emergency management

system. The area experiences earthquakes several times a year. The quakes can destroy cell towers and phone lines in an instant. Amateur Radio can be a huge asset during a disaster like this, so Pasadena has a network of radio operators trained to provide communications at any time they need. They can contact hospitals or fire stations to better serve their community. Ham operators can even aid families in contacting one another once a disaster has passed.

Are you interested in learning how to operate a ham radio of your own to serve your community? Then the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) may be for you. They are a group of radio operators who volunteer for various disasters and public service events. They can provide guidance for training, equipment, and licensing.

(I would be willing to teach a Technician class to a group of non-ham CERT members) ed.

Making waves: Race, radio and the legacy of Wendell King '24

found by WA3MKT

At 8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 14, 1920, Union's student-operated radio station conducted a historic broadcast. Using a 150-watt transmitter from a

studio in a shack behind the electrical engineering building with the antenna strung between two trees, the half-hour broadcast opened with tenor John



Steel's "Tell Me Little Gypsy."

Back then, the station signed on as 2ADD. Those were the personal call letters of Wendell W. King

'24, the chief engineer and an avid amateur radio hobbyist.

"What is believed to be the first attempt of a college radio club to give a musical concert by wireless telephone was successfully made last night at Union College," the *Schenectady Gazette* noted the following morning. "The strains of a phonograph playing into the receiver of a radio telephone set for a 100-mile radius were plainly heard by amateur operators within 50 miles..."

King's contributions received accolades on campus and in the community, but his story dimmed over the decades.

This summer, King's name re-entered the public consciousness for his role in a polarizing strike at the nearby General Electric plant. On June 18, 1917, more than 2,000 machinists walked out to protest King's presence in their shop. King was black, and the labor union supported the segregation of "Negroes from the white workers."

The strike occurred following King's first year at Union. Media coverage surrounding the 100th anniversary has provided an opportunity to reflect on King's complicated time on campus.

When he entered Union in 1916, King's reputation for radio wizardry had already taken root. Growing up in nearby Troy, he took a keen interest in wireless telegraphy. At 12, he started his own amateur radio station. He later became president of the Troy Amateur Radio Club.

King's arrival on campus was notable in another regard: he was, as the *Encyclopedia of Union College History* notes, "the first black student to attend Union for a significant length of time."

How he or others on campus felt about that distinction is unknown. The archives contain no material addressing the subject, and subsequent profiles of King during his professional career make no mention of it.

In any event, with his passion for amateur radio, King picked electrical engineering as his pursuit of

study and joined the fledgling Union College Radio Club.

After his first year, King and about two dozen other students were referred by the College for summer jobs at GE. King was assigned to operate a drill press. If his skin color was irrelevant on campus, it was a lightning rod for the machinists at Building 23 at the industrial giant's massive campus. They had already feared GE was going to import black labor from the South for their jobs.

"The company has been employing a large number of Negroes recently and placing them in the yard as laborers, but a short time ago, one of them who was more intelligent was placed in the shops on the machine," read a front-page story in the *Schenectady Union-Star*. "The men are not asking for the discharge of the Negro, but simply that he be taken off machinists' work."

When management balked at the union's demands, the machinists walked out and marched to Crescent Park (now Veteran's Park) for a rally.

"Do not lose sight of the fact that we are fighting, not on the grounds of race prejudice, but on the grounds of moral convictions," the leader, Joseph Lefkowitz, told his men.

"This nation has several regiments of Negro soldiers," he continued. "It is known that those Negroes are not allowed to frequent the same recreation grounds as the white soldiers nor are they in any manner allowed to mingle with the whites. What this government sees fit in practicing, we feel justified in demanding."

Lefkowitz threatened to enlist other unions in the fight, which could have been devastating to GE, a major supplier of military equipment during World War I.

Stating that it did not tolerate discrimination, the company refused to yield. After eight days, the strike ended abruptly.

"It is understood that the colored man, who was the direct cause of the strike because the men refused to work with him, will continue at his machine tomorrow morning," according to a front-page account in the *Times Union* June 26, 1917. "But he will be transferred to other work, thus permitting both sides to save their face, as it were."

So how did the episode sit with King, who had just turned 20 a month earlier? Remarkably, the voluminous amounts of press coverage of the strike failed to include comment from the college student at the center of the dispute.

King returned to Union in the fall to resume his studies. He took a brief hiatus the following year to enlist in the service. He was assigned to the U.S. Army Signal Corps, which specialized in radio communications. He attained the rank of sergeant, but was never deployed because the war was ending.

A member of Omega Psi Phi, King also joined Union's Cosmopolitan Club, which "promoted international understanding and good feeling." During a year-long celebration of the different cultures that formed the membership, King oversaw "Negro Night." He gave talks on "The Services of the Colored People During the War" and "Prominent Negroes of Today." His mother performed "typical colored songs" including "Swanee River" accompanied by her husband on violin. The program concluded with the King family singing "I Follow Thee."

King continued to devote considerable time to amateur radio. He received minor attention in the press.

"College Student is Radio Expert," proclaimed the *Schenectady Gazette* in a profile. *The Concordiensis* followed with "Junior Famous for Radio Work."

King's involvement in outside activities undoubtedly contributed to his poor academic record. He was forced to repeat his first and

sophomore years, and after six years, he had still not completed his junior year. He was often cited for skipping classes and received a number of incomplete grades, suggesting that it was not a question of not being smart enough, but of not trying.

The 1921 yearbook entry on King states: “We hardly know what to say about King. Just as soon as classes are over, he makes for the E.E. Lab and hides himself away in the wireless room, and you couldn’t get him out for love or money. His whole time is taken up with tuning coils, vacuum bulbs, rotary spark gaps, etc...”

In April 1922, Dean Garis wrote to King’s father, Henry: “On account of the unwillingness of your son to attend regularly to his college work I have found it necessary to ask him to withdraw from college.”

Despite not graduating from Union, King kept loose ties with the school. He donated sporadically to the Annual Fund, and when he died in April 1965 from heart disease at 67, his widow, Iva, wrote to the school to inform them of his passing.

After Union, King worked as chief engineer for an Ohio radio station and spent years as a research electrical engineer in Erie, Pa., where he helped create the first radio station in 1927. His skills were recognized in a profile in the *Journal of Negro Life* in 1930.

“Wendell W. King is not only a competent radio engineer but he is a Negro radio engineer who has met and obliterated the ‘color line,’ ” the article states.

“President Dixon Ryan Fox once observed that ‘There is much to learn in the students’ college as well as in the professors’ college,’ ” said Wayne Somers, editor of the Encyclopedia of Union College History. “When he arrived at Union, Wendell King was already so intently focused on radio - a subject not yet part of the Electrical Engineering curriculum - that he studied almost exclusively in the students’ college, especially the

Radio Club. The College’s remarkable willingness to keep giving King another chance to pass his required courses suggests that the faculty understood him pretty well and sympathized.

“In the end, he got from Union most of what he could use, though he clearly hoped to earn a diploma, as well. Despite the GE fracas, the fact that King was the first black student to spend much time at Union now seems almost irrelevant to his personal story.”

Ham Radio Calendar

August 1 – RAE Club Meeting

August 3 - North American CW QSO Party. See www.ncjweb.com

August 6 – Corry Club meeting

August 8 – Union City Club meeting

August 10 - Maryland-DC QSO Party. See <http://www.w3vpr.org/mdcqsoparty>

August 10 – DX Engineering Hamfest. See DXEngineering.com

August 13 – Wattsburg Wireless Club meeting

August 17 – VE Exams at Greene Township Building on Tate Road

August 17 - North American SSB QSO Party. See www.ncjweb.com

August 24 - Hawaii QSO Party. See www.hawaiiqsoparty.org

August 24 - W/VE Islands QSO Party. See usislands.org

August 24 - Kansas QSO Party. See ksqsoparty.org

August 24 - Ohio QSO Party. See www.ohqp.org

August 26 - Birthday of Lee De Forest, called “father of radio” for his 1906 invention of the triode.